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GALAHAD AND THE HOLY GRAIL

A graphic adventure with almost 100 rooms for one or more players
(ages 12 and up)

Diskette: 32K (APX-20132)

Requires:
One ATARI Joystick Controller

Entertainment

GALAHAD AND THE HOLY GRAIL

by
Douglas Crockford

Program and Manual Contents © 1982 Douglas Crockford

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Introduction

Legendary background

You are a knight, a stranger in a mystical land, on a quest to find the Holy Grail. You will face many dangers, including a fire-breathing dragon and giant spiders.

Loosely based on the King Arthur legend, Galahad involves no typing or display of text. Instead, it uses graphics and sound effects extensively. This is a complex game. Look over these instructions before beginning your journey.

The story of the quest for the Holy Grail is steeped in early Christian mysticism. It was the custom of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table not to sit down to dinner on the Pentecost until a miracle occurred. One year, the miracles began with the appointment of Sir Galahad, son of Lancelot and the last descendant of Joseph of Arimathea, to the Round Table at the seat called Siege Perelous.

That night, after evensong, there was a great sound of thunder and a blinding light. The Holy Grail was carried through the hall by a maiden. It was covered with white samite so no one could see it. It had the fragrant odor of spices. Food and drink of each's desire appeared. And the grail was gone.

Sir Gawain and many other knights swore that they would depart the next day on a quest to find the Grail. This made Arthur very sad, for he knew that many good knights would not return, and that perhaps the Fellowship of the Round Table would be broken.

After many miraculous adventures, Sir Galahad, Sir Percivale, and Sir Bors, by authority of their great virtue, succeeded in the mysterious quest. Galahad's soul was taken by angels, and a hand appeared also taking the Grail and the Spear to heaven. Sir Percivale died about a year later. Sir Bors returned to Camelot and reported Sir Galahad's last words: "Remember how ephemeral is the earth!"

For the Spear was the one that had pierced Jesus Christ. The Grail was the cup in which drops of His blood had been collected. Both had been taken to Britain by Joseph of Arimathea. Or so the story goes.

Required accessories

- 32K RAM
- ATARI 810 Disk Drive
- ATARI Joystick Controller

Contacting the author

Users wishing to contact the author about Galahad and the Holy Grail may write to him at:

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Sunnyvale, CA 94087

Loading GALAHAD into computer memory

1. Remove any cartridges from the cartridge slot of your computer.
2. Plug a joystick into the number 1 (leftmost) controller jack at the front of your computer console.
3. Have your computer turner OFF.
4. Turn on your disk drive.
5. When for the busy light to goes out, open the disk drive door and insert the GALAHAD diskette with the label in the lower right-hand corner nearest to you. Close the door.
6. After a few seconds, Sir Gawain's speech will display. When the White Chapel appears, you may begin your quest.
7. To start a new game at any time, press the SYSTEM RESET button.

Playing a simplified version

To play a simplified form of GALAHAD, press the SELECT button at any time. Selecting the simple version changes three features.

- It unlocks the three doors.
- The path to the Grail begins at the White Castle.
- The White Chapel turns black to indicate that you selected the simplified version of the game.

Playing Galahad and the Holy Grail

Movement

Move your knight by pushing the joystick up, down, left, and right. You'll discover that you can move more easily on roads and meadows than through forests and up stairs. Some surfaces are deadly (like deep water). Some, like walls and mountains, cannot normally be passed through. Beware of walls, for they are enchanted and may pull you in.

There are portals in various places. If you move through one, you will be transported to another place. The four most important portals are in the mountains, in the forest, in the Black Castle, and in the White Castle.

Some places have secret passages. You can't see them, but you can move through them. The problem, of course, is finding them.

Helpful objects

Several objects are scattered around that may help you in your quest. To pick one up, bump into it. To drop it, press the joystick button and move away from it. You can carry only one object at a time.

Sword. Use the sword to fight monsters, battle knights, and frighten insects. It works best when you keep your foes to your left or right.

Action Wedge. The wedge helps you run your fastest and jump your highest.

Magic Ring. The magic ring protects you from monsters and hand grenades.

Holy Hand Grenade of Antioch. The hand grenade explodes three seconds after you drop it. It breaks down walls and kills anything in the room. It doesn't open locked doors. Don't use it near portals because it might close them forever.

Keys. Three keys unlock the three doors. The keys are color coded to the doors they open.

Dangers

Your quest is fraught with peril. Should you die, you return to the White Chapel and anyone or thing you may have killed is resurrected.

The occasional traps around the maze remain in the same place from game to game. The knights and monsters are mobile.

Knights Errant. There are knights travelling about looking for challenges. They know nothing of your quest, but they know of your great skill as a knight and want to test themselves by fighting you to the death. They are fair knights, and won't fight you unarmed.

Dragon. The dragon flies, breathes fire, and has sharp teeth and claws.

Rabbit. This creature is so foul and cruel that no man has fought with it and lived.

Spiders. These insects lurk in close spaces and in sticky webs.

Monster Moth. It was a graveyard smoth.

Start. You die if you press the START key.

Winning

Set your goals before you start. Swear to do one or more of the following (or make up a goal of your own).

- To find the three keys
- To find the Holy Grail
- To return the Grail to the White Chapel
- To not press the SELECT key
- To attain the goal in one life
- To attain the goal in (some fixed amount of time)
- To slay all the monsters

Whether or not you meet your goal is a matter of your own honor as a knight. The program neither judges you nor rewards you with points.

Tournament play

When playing with two or more players, first agree on goals. One player plays a complete game, and then passes the joystick on to the next contestant. The winner is the one to meet the goals in the smallest number of lives (with ties being settled by the smallest amount of time), or in the smallest amount of time (with close times being settled by the smallest number of lives).

Another way to play is to take turns during the same game. After each life ends (or after an agreed upon period of time), hand the joystick to the next player. The winner is the player holding the joystick at the attainment of the goal.

Further reading

The definitive source on Arthur is Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. It was published by William Caxton in 1484. It has been rendered for modern readers in at least two newer editions, one by Robert Graves (from which I took Sir Gawain's speech) and another, *The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights* by John Steinbeck. Like all great stories, Arthur is told and retold. Perhaps the finest retelling is *The Once and Future King* by T.H. White. Perhaps the most inventive retelling is Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.

The other source is *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. It may have been written around 1400. Its author is unknown. There is a wonderful verse translation by J.R.R. Tolkien.

There are similar works of more recent origin that are also magical and heroic. J.R.R. Tolkien was also the author of the Middle Earth cycle. The best introduction to Middle Earth is *The Hobbit*. Also very good is the Earthsea Trilogy, beginning with *A Wizard of Earthsea* by Ursula K. Le Guin.

There have been many recent movies in this genre. Among these are *Dragonslayer*, John Boorman's *Excalibur*, George Romero's *Knightriders*, and *Monty Python and The Holy Grail*. *Knightriders* is about people in the 80's trying to live by the standards of the Round Table. The Monty Python film, while being very funny, is probably closer to the truth of the real Arthur than is *Excalibur*.

A final note. Most of what we know about Arthur comes from works written a thousand years later. When we think about the Knights of the Round Table, we think of the armor and chivalry. But those were invented centuries after Arthur. Malory gave his work about a great English king a French title. That may have been stylish after the Norman invasion, but would have been insulting in Arthur's day.

Designer's notes

I developed the game as a reaction to the many verbose Adventure and Dungeon games. I wanted to present a sense of exploring a strange land. There may be no undiscovered places in this world, but we can invent them, and computers can make them real. To encourage experimentation and discovery, I've limited the helpfulness of these instructions.

I hope that you find the game educational in at least three aspects. First, it gives drill in using a joystick, which is rapidly becoming an essential skill. Second, I hope to encourage an interest in reading and comparative history. Third, the game gives practical experience in pointer manipulation and list processing, which are two names for one of the most important concepts in computer science. (Each screen is actually a node in a network, each linked to one to five other nodes. Moving through the game can be viewed as a tree-traversal.)

My concept of the game changed as I developed it, largely on the advice of the ATARI 800 Computer. There are some things it does poorly, but it does other things so incredibly well that no one notices its limitations. The key to developing programs on this machine is to understand all the things that it really does well, and build your game around them. Often, an interesting "rule" will exist only to hide something the machine can't do, but you don't mind because the rule makes the game more interesting. I believe this is also true for arcade games like Centipede™ and Missile Command™.

I made the backgrounds using the ATARI BASIC calls GR.3 for a couple of reasons. First, of all the graphics modes, it uses the smallest amount of memory, allowing me to stuff 96 different rooms and a program in 32K of memory. Also, the amount of memory for a screen in GR.3 is slightly less than a page. The 6502 microprocessor loves dealing with page-sized objects.

You'll notice that I "flip" instead of scroll from one room to another. Scrolling is easy to do on the ATARI 800 Computer and looks great. I resisted the temptation to use it because I wanted to have the flavor of a haunted house game we used to play called "Spook-in-the-dark." Flipping into a room is more like having walls and doors; you can't really see what's in the dark room until you get there. With scrolling, you might get warning.

All of the objects that move around are done with player/missile graphics. The program is built around a simple multitasking operation system. Each object is directed by its own independent program. I used two display list interrupts to create a 120 Hz clock for scheduling. The explosion effect is done simply by using the missiles as a fifth player, and then moving the missiles apart.

The program took about four months to develop. I did it using the Assembler Editor Cartridge on an ATARI 800 Computer with 48K of memory and two disk drives. If you have anything to say about Galahad and the Holy Grail, I'd like to hear from you.

GALAHAD AND THE HOLY GRAIL

by Douglas Crockford

Recommended for ages 12 and up/Written in machine language

Harken back to the days of old and the legend of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. As you recall, in King Arthur's court several knights set off in search of the Holy Grail. Only the truly virtuous succeeded.

With GALAHAD AND THE HOLY GRAIL, you become one of the knights on this holy mission. First you decide on your goals. You must swear (this *is* a game of honor) to accomplish one or more of several goals, such as to find three keys, find the Holy Grail, return the Grail to the white chapel, or slay all monsters. If you and some friends wish to play a tournament, you first agree on the goals and then take turns playing a complete round.

The first screen displays the white chapel, the beginning of your journey. Using your Joystick Controller, you guide your knight through a terrain of walls, roads, meadows, forests, and other obstacles. Some of the walls have magnetic powers. You can enter secret portals when you pass over them. As you travel horizontally, vertically, backwards, and forwards, you will encounter dangers from such unexpected sources as travelling knights, a dragon, and spiders. If you're lucky, you've found a variety of implements to help you fend off the attackers and assist in your search. If one of the challengers defeats you, the game starts again and another player tries to reach the goal. GALAHAD AND THE HOLY GRAIL comes in two levels of difficulty.

The author invites written questions and comments.

About the Author



DOUGLAS CROCKFORD

Designing Galahad and the Holy Grail was a part-time project Doug Crockford of Sunnyvale, California undertook for his own amusement. Feeling most adventure-style games were too verbose, Doug wanted to design one that was all action and completely symbolic. Submitting his game to APX paid off for Doug in

more than one way. It brought him to the attention of the Atari software staff, and he is now a game designer on Atari's corporate research and development staff. Doug brings experience in several areas to his programming efforts. After receiving his degree in radio and television at San Francisco State University, he went to work designing word processing and office information systems. In addition, he pursues an interest in music both on and off the job. Formerly a bass guitar player with a rock group called Oceanrock, Doug is currently composing pieces with medieval undertones. We're proud to have discovered this talented game designer for the benefit of all ATARI Home Computer users.

REVIEW COMMENTS

With the monsters, keys, swords, evil knights, castles, and mazes, the game is spellbinding. The action is fast and challenging. The colors and graphics are fun. Secret portals and enchanted walls give elements of surprise.

The user manual is as wonderfully imaginative as the game!

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